A

SKETCH

OF THE

PARTIES AND MEASURES

OF THE

PRESENT REIGN.

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OF THE

PRESENT REIGN,

TO THE

ACCESSION TO POWER

OF THE

PRESENT MINISTRY

IN 1784.

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M.DCC.XC.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

READER.

THE following pages were originally written in ſtill leſs *correct* LANGUAGE than they now intrude themſelves in, becauſe in a FOREIGN *one*; for the peruſal of a Genevois Gentleman, a renewed acquaintance of the Author's, upon their meeting at Paris a few years ago, and ſome months after the meeting of the laſt Parliament.

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The Author cannot accuſe himſelf of having deviated from truth and impartiality, becauſe he had neither inclination nor temptation ſo to do. If he has unintentionally, he would honeſtly wiſh, what more conſiderable perſons in the ſame circumſtances have profeſſed, to be better informed, and corrected. If, *in the only part where he has felt a conſiderable degree of heſitation*, and to which he hardly need *allude*, he has ever the mortification to find he has given perſonal offence to thoſe whoſe high pledge to the country, from perſonal worth, entitles them to be the moſt jealous of any attack on the integrity of their motives, he

can

can only ſay, *it will be more than quarrelling with his bread and butter*, it will be *almoſt* tearing his own fleſh and blood.

One word ſhould be added, to ſay the original, written in French, was in conſequence of the Gentleman for whoſe peruſal it was firſt intended not ſeeming clearly to underſtand in converſation, or at leaſt to reconcile, the ideas of the Families whoſe anceſtors introduced the Revolution, and the preſent Royal Family, appearing in any degree of perſonal oppoſition to the Crown in the *preſent* reign.

AUGUST 1790.

A

SKETCH, &c.

IT is well known, that the event of the Revolution was founded on the jealouſy which the Engliſh entertained of the religion and political principles of James the Second. His conduct becoming every day more than ſuſpicious, a conjunction was formed among ſome of the principal Families in the country, ſince known by the name of Revolution Families, to invite William Prince of Orange to deliver the kingdom from the threatening conſequences of James's uſurpations, and to offer him the Crown of theſe kingdoms, which James in a moment of terror had abdicated, under certain conditions, eſtabliſhed on the ſpirit of the Conſtitution. The circum-

ſtance of an abdication was as happy for the general peace of the Country as it was favourable for the peaceable reception of the Prince, who might otherwiſe have been accuſed of having taken advantage of the jealouſy of the times, and having put himſelf at the head of a diſcontented Party to drive his Father-in-law from the Throne: and if James had had the firmneſs to have waited for an attempt of force, he would have found a party ſufficiently ſtrong to have made a forcible ſeizure of the Government at leaſt a very hazardous undertaking.

William, therefore, being quietly ſeated on the vacant throne, a new Code of Laws was formed by a common conſent of all Parties; a ſort of renewal of the Conſtitution, ſetting out upon this as a firſt principle, that the Sovereign Power was a public truſt, for the faithful execution of which the Sovereign was reſponſible to his People.

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All this is pretty well known to any one tolerably read in hiſtory. We are equally acquainted with the arrangement which eſtabliſhed the Hanover family on the throne, after the death of Queen Anne without children.

At this time Parties were not entirely reconciled; and the Family whom James had left were not without well-wiſhers among the deſcendants of thoſe whoſe anceſtors were ſatisfied with the deciſion of the Country upon the *perſonal* miſconduct of King James. The Party naturally attached to the new King (George) was compoſed of the families who themſelves, or whoſe anceſtors had had a principal ſhare in the Revolution. The friends of the abdicated Family (known by the name of the *Jacobites*) waited, under a ſort of excluſion from favour, for events which they thought more than once, under the reigns of the two firſt Georges, favourable enough to hazard an attempt

of Reſtoration: and if their young Prince had had the ſpirit of ſome of his adherents, the ſecond of theſe attempts, it is thought, would have ſhaken the Throne.

After this repulſe, and ſome ſevere neceſſary examples, George the Second lived to make *his Party* good; but it was not among the fortunate circumſtances of his fortunate and glorious reign to reconcile the ſpirit of Parties in the country. The acceſſion of his grandſon, George the Third, ſeemed the period when this event was to take place. Every Party ſeemed reconciled and united, or rather all Party ſpirit ſeemed forgot in the general eagerneſs of congratulation on the acceſſion of the young King, who united to the advantage of a natural prejudice, attending the circumſtance of his being born an Engliſhman, that more eſſential one of an univerſal public confidence, in the integrity and warmth of his private character.

The firſt ſtep which cooled or damped

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the expectation of a people who idolized their new Sovereign, and had tranſported themſelves with every expectation which affectionate loyalty could form, was the introduction of a Scotchman*, by rather a haſty progreſſion, to the firſt reſponſible place in Adminiſtration. This Nobleman had been one of the intimate companions of the preſent King's Father, who died Prince of Wales. He had equally attached himſelf to his widow the Princeſs Dowager, by whoſe direction he had the government of the young Prince's education. Thoſe who were not the moſt

* I ſpeak here of the popular ſuſpicions of the moment. —The elegant and nervous compliment paid by a Great Miniſter to thoſe of that country, who had contributed their ſhare to the ſucceſs of his war, after that Miniſter had retired before the influence the Favourite, breathed broader ideas.—"I abhor," ſaid he, "all national pre-"judices.—When I was allowed to recommend to the "Crown, I ſought for merit wherever it was to be found; "and I found it on the Mountains of the North.—It was "not the country of the man I oppoſed, but the man of "that country who held principles incompatible with "freedom, and inculcated them in language unfit for a "Britiſh Monarch to hear."

his

his friends gave him the character of an honeſt man in private life, but not of a capacity enlarged enough to form the mind of a great King; and he was not unſuſpected of principles which were very unfit for the ears of a King of Great Britain. And to this he certainly added a height and imperiouſneſs of character and conduct, which would ſuffer no competitor in power, and which he ſhewed to all the world, without much management or reſerve.—It was probably this laſt quality which hurt him the moſt in his new ſituation, and perhaps has been one principal cauſe of ſome misfortunes in his Maſter's reign, which very poſſibly he did not foreſee. His Lordſhip was ſuſpected of having ſome remains of attachment and reſpect to the excluded Family: I hardly think this probable; it is more ſo, that he inherited the principles of that Family whoſe name he bore, and that his pride and object was to imprint thoſe princi-

ples

ples in the mind of his new Sovereign, who had been his pupil, and he had learned to conſider almoſt as an adopted child. He ſhewed his views too ſoon and too openly, an indifference bordering on contempt of the firſt Nobility, and this rather more marked towards the great Families, who had ſhewn the moſt peculiar and cordial attachment to the King's Family, was one of the leading features of his acceſſion to office, and one of the firſt conſequences was, the retirement (in diſguſt) of Mr. Pitt, whoſe character was as proud as Lord Bute's; whoſe talents were infinitely ſuperior, and whoſe name was great throughout Europe. This great man was loſt to the country, in the middle of his and her glory, becauſe my Lord Bute was to govern the cabinet.

His Lordſhip was now without oppoſition in council, and the firſt public act of his Adminiſtration was the Peace of

1763,

1763, which brought Mr. Pitt, out of his dignified retirement; and his memorable ſpeech of ſome hours, was the proteſt of the ſucceſsful Miniſter of a ſucceſsful and glorious war, againſt a Peace which he, and no inconſiderable part of the country, conſidered at leaſt as inadequate to our high ſituation in the eyes of the world. However peace being confirmed, the views of the Miniſter were turned within at home; the King and his Miniſtry had only the interior government of the country to attend to.

His Majeſty *perſonally* had the univerſal confidence of the people at large, who thought him incapable of forming a wiſh, but conſiſtent with *their* happineſs, and who only lamented his devoted attachment to a Miniſter, who was not ſo univerſally thought incapable of abuſing his Friend and Maſter's confidence. Every ſort of invective and accuſation was thrown

out

out againſt this unfortunate Favourite, and by degrees the ſoreneſs of mind of ſome diſguſted people, who gave ſcope to the feelings of the day, began not to ſpare the character of the King, who was ſometimes accuſed of what it was almoſt ludicrous to ſuppoſe. Sometimes you would hear it ſaid, that Lord Bute, being an inveterate Jacobite, had got ſo hold of the King's ear, that he had made a Jacobite of his Majeſty. Unluckily his counſels, ſuch as they were, were ſuch as to have driven the Anti-Jacobite Party in diſguſt, and almoſt in diſgrace, from the ſervice and familiar correſpondence of St. James's, and with them the great Mr. Pitt, who was out of the line of the diſtinction of *Party*, but who had carried the Britiſh name, with triumph, through every quarter of the globe.

The favourite avowed project of the Miniſter was, to annihilate all diſtinction

of party in the country, and to make, as he ſaid, his Maſter the King of all his people, and what a King ought to be. He failed in both inſtances. The ſpirit of party has diſtracted the country more than ever, and the ſituation of his Majeſty has never been, what a good ſubject would wiſh to ſee it.

It is a ſecret which the Earl of Bute has kept to himſelf, if he foreſaw the conſequence of his counſels, at that moment when he felt his mind better ſatisfied to retire from public obſervation, than obſtinately to oppoſe the public wiſhes, and affront their diſguſt, by keeping, on the ground of perſonal favour, his place in the Cabinet.

I have heard, he has had the candour to confeſs his regret, at having ever quitted his family and his garden, where he was a good father and huſband, a ſteady friend; and where his talents as a Philoſophical

ſophical Nobleman, were by no means contemptible, in order to attach himſelf to employments, where the talents he poſſeſſed, and the principles he had adopted, were more than incompatible.

His ſucceſſor entered the Cabinet, under the odium of being only a machine, the main ſpring of which was played behind the curtain; and whether this ſuſpicion was juſt or injurious, the ſame principles were purſued, the meaſures of Government were meaſures of force, and the hand of authority was diſtinguiſhed. The two principal characteriſtick acts of Mr. Grenville's Adminiſtration militated againſt the Spirit of the Conſtitution: they are well-known by the names of the Cider Tax, and the American Stamp Act.

The firſt was a partial burden upon three or four counties, whoſe univerſal drink was the taxed commodities, ſo

that, in effect, their *ſmall* beer was double taxed: and what made this the more unpalatable was, the manner of collecting by the exploded and unpopular mode of Exciſe.

The ſecond, more univerſally known by its conſequences to America, England, and Europe in general, was the Stamp Act, impoſing a duty, by the authority of the Engliſh Parliament, on all deeds, &c. on ſtamped paper. The pretext was to relieve Great Britain from the burden of the late war, for the protection, in great meaſure, of America, for which ſhe was thought in a condition to contribute by a tax. The mode, as in the other inſtance, was the offence. Taxation without repreſentation was the grievance, and the ſpirit of the Deſcendants of England, was rouſed by the Mother Country impoſing that contribution by the hand of force, and the authority of an unrepreſenting

ſenting Parliament, which ſhe would readily have anſwered as a debt, upon the general requiſition of the Parent State. This inroad on Britiſh liberty, of internal arrangement, ſet great part of America in a flame. The detail of this revolt and reſiſtance, ſince become a ſucceſsful rebellion, is too well known by all the world.

Her juſtification was ſupported only at firſt by ſome ſpeculative politicians, who loſt ſight of the partial intereſts of their country, and recurred to firſt principles of Government, and the original *ſpirit* of the conſtitution of that *country*.

Every tax, ſaid the law of the Britiſh Conſtitution, ſhall be raiſed by the People, or their Repreſentatives. The defenders of the Stamp Act, to juſtify this ſeeming abuſe of a principle they admitted, ſaid, "America is *virtually* repreſented in the "Parliament of Great Britain," who were the

the Repreſentative of the whole empire, of which America was a part: and this equivocal reaſoning ſatisfied men's minds at home, though the Tax in queſtion it was found neceſſary, the year after, to repeal: but the principle remained, and that principle has coſt the Nation the tragedy which, at the end of ten years unſucceſsful conteſt on the part of Great Britain, has terminated in the total emancipation of America from the Crown of England, and the loſs of her confidence and affection for the Mother Country.

A fair and candid conſideration induces one to think and hope that the Miniſter of that day, who died ſome few years after with the character of an honeſt man, and a man of attentive diligence in what he *thought* right; with no other ſtriking fault than a degree of inflexibility in an opinion once taken up, really *thought* he was ſerving the general intereſts of the empire. He had

had formed his opinion on the ſubject on his pillow, and a levee crowded with merchants repreſenting its dangerous conſequence was not capable of ſhaking his deciſion. He had, with unprejudiced men, the character of a faithful ſervant of the State; but not of poſſeſſing a genius of extenſive and comprehenſive views, like his relation Pitt. Though he had no millſtone of a Favourite to fight, this haſty ſtroke overturned his Adminiſtration, and made way for the introduction of rather a new ſort of experiment, in placing at the head of affairs my Lord Rockingham, a perſon of conſiderable natural conſequence, of unblemiſhed integrity in private life, new however to public office and employment.

The Duke of Cumberland's authority with his nephew, and the reſpect *he* was held in, raiſed the expectation of the Whigs, at the head of which it was underſtood Lord Rockingham was to form his

his Adminiſtration. Lord Rockingham's character, particularly in point of abilities, was not perhaps generally known. The cry of the day was, that he was a young country Nobleman, a very honeſt man, and an amiable character; but that he had neither abilities nor experience to form and ſelect an Adminiſtration, or to conduct the Government as its head. Experience ſeems to have ſhewed the contrary. His abilities, I believe, were of the quickeſt ſort; his penetration into mankind, and his management of that *neceſſary evil*, Party, his particular characteriſtic in an eminent degree; and he has been remarked to have had not only the walk and manner of a Miniſter, as if *that* was his *hereditary* place, but to have commanded that particular recollection of little matters of trifling *ſeeming* importance, by which hackneyed Miniſters learn to keep the balance among the jealouſy of ſuſpicious friends

friends and adherents. Without poſſeſſing that ſort of genius, like Mr. Pitt, the characteriſtic of which was a talent for proud impoſing ſuperiority, he had all his pride and firmneſs, without that particular inflexibility which tore Mr. Grenville from a ſituation he otherwiſe filled with dignity. He ſaw part of his ground, in a public meaſure, *though young* in public life, with infinite quickneſs, and he had attached thoſe to him whoſe further view from longer experience he could truſt, and he acted with that confidence which a confidence in the fidelity of his *miniſterial* Cabinet inſpired. His manners were *naturally* popular; his integrity without an *iota* of ſuſpicion; he certainly had the voice of the people, and he thought he had received conviction of having the ear of his Sovereign.

The ground failed ſomewhere, and this Adminiſtration of experiment, as it was ſometimes called, were tripped up, when they thought they were on a ſmooth path,

and ſtanding on public, and every degree of private favour. The little part I have had in public has been in concert with this particular Party; it is therefore almoſt impoſſible for me to ſpeak with perfect impartiality, and to decide how far thoſe whoſe influence removed this Adminiſtration *deſigned*, and *deſigned judiciouſly*, for the true intereſt of the country in their diſmiſſion. The two marked features of their Adminiſtration were, the repeal of the Cider Tax, and of that more conſequential one, the renewed principle of which has ſowed the ſeed of the unripe independence of America, and of thoſe fruits of which Great Britain has her *ſhare* with the reſt of Europe in gathering.

This Adminiſtration, which had held office only a year, were obliged to reſign it into the hands of the Perſon who had the right to diſmiſs them, after thanking them for what he condeſcended to call

their

their good *intentions*. The thanks of the Public, for the public *effects* of thoſe intentions, could only follow their diſmiſſion, which was too well concerted, and too ſuddenly executed, for the *Public* to foreſee, and which it did not appear *they* had deſired.

From this period we may date the bringing forward and avowal of that ſyſtem of which Lord Bute had been ſuſpected (in ſome meaſure perhaps innocently) of being ſole author and adviſer. In America the renewal of the principle of Taxation was re-opened, under the known intention of continuing and forcing its object under the idea of virtual repreſentation; while, at home, we were employed in reforming and directing the actual repreſentation, in a conteſt againſt the perſon of an individual, who had rendered himſelf obnoxious to Government. Upon his expulſion, which took

place as a Member of the Houſe of Commons, the County he repreſented thought proper to re-chooſe him. This became a ſerious conteſt between the Houſe of Commons, ſupported, as uſual, or rather directed by the Miniſters of the Crown, and a very conſiderable part of the Electors of Great Britain, who made common cauſe with the County immediately concerned. Repreſentations, under the form at firſt of anxious Petitions, were ſent from ſome of the moſt reſpectable Counties and Boroughs to the foot of the Throne, for the diſſolution of a Parliament at variance with the Electing Body of the country. His Majeſty at firſt received them and anſwered them with the appearance of conſideration of a Father, who pitied the wanton and peeviſh diſcontent of his children; but, in the language of a King, plainly gave them to underſtand that his duty was to conſult the

true

true intereſt of his People, and to hear their ſentiments only through the medium of his Parliament, on which he placed a confidence well deſerved on their part. The People, a very great and leading part of them at leaſt, continued not to be of the ſame opinion of that Parliament, which they no longer conſidered as *their* Repreſentatives, nor with his Majeſty. This *contradiction of ſentiments*, and the contented *indifference* ſhewn by thoſe who adviſed the Crown to *reconcile* it, occaſioned *Remonſtrances* which ſpoke a plainer language to the Throne, and were anſwered with more firmneſs and leſs tenderneſs of conſideration for the remonſtrating parties, whoſe diſreſpectful continuance of complaint it was thought proper to condemn from the Throne.

This Parliament, ſo ſupported at home, and ſo oppoſed in America, continued however to repreſent both parts of the

the empire; and about this time Lord North, whoſe name has ſince become ſo well known in both countries, took what is commonly called the Conduct of the Houſe of Commons, and became the oſtenſible *Miniſter*, as he had from his youth been one of the confidential *friends* of the King.

This Parliament, and that which followed it, after having unhappily miſcalculated on theſe heads, heard and ſaw, too plainly not to attend to it, the ſituation of the returning anxiety of the country for the re-admiſſion of that Party which had once, after gaining credit for endeavouring to diſembarraſs the country, given way to that powerful ſomething which governed the *interior* cabinet at St. James's—and who had at leaſt one merit to plead with their country, that whatever miſtakes in politics or conduct had deprived them of favour, had coſt HER nothing.

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My Lord North, lamenting that he had been an *unfortunate* Miniſter, retired to his family and perſonal friends with ſuch ſatisfaction as the purity of his intentions left him to enjoy. To do him (what the unfortunate and the criminal have a right to) juſtice, the public and almoſt confeſſed corruption of the generality of Miniſters no impartial man even *ſuſpected* him of having deſerved the accuſation of: but the moſt partial of his friends could not diſpute that he had been unfortunate in the execution of his truſt. He was not followed into retirement by the thankful gratitude of the People, and, I believe, not with the moſt affectionate ſympathy of his Friend and Maſter; but he ſeemed content, as he had reaſon to be, with the enjoyment of a lucrative Place for life, among thoſe ſinecures which the reform of offices left untouched; and he had the conſideration for the country (I ſpeak it ſincerely

ſincerely to his honour), not to take advantage of his ſituation while Miniſter, to add any thing to the public burden in the form of permanent emolument to himſelf.

We may now leave this conſpicuous figure out of public conſideration, to review a ſcene of a very different nature and equally unexpected, in ſome of its parts. The retreat of Lord North, was followed by the re-appointment, after near fifteen years ſteady oppoſition, of the Marquis of Rockingham and his Friends.

But before we enter into the detail of this ſecond Rockingham Adminiſtration, which was ſome months after terminated by his death; a word upon the character of a man, who made a part of that Adminiſtration, I mean the Earl of Shelburne. He had been among the conſtant and uniform oppoſers of the Adminiſtration of Lord North, and had acted in concert upon every capital point, on which this

this oppoſition was founded; but at the ſame time had attached a very ſmall party, who were perſonally and entirely devoted to him, and who, in every change and every circumſtance, had preſerved an inviolable attachment to him. This laſt circumſtance was more remarkable, as their Patron was a perſon who had always had an ambiguous public character, and who in all this long and apparently ſteady oppoſition, had never gained either the confidence of the public whoſe cauſe he eſpouſed, nor of the particular Party, of whom he long been one of the principal ſupporters; and among whom now he would perhaps not have been courted for a high office, but from the conſideration of that ſort of talents equally capable of ſerving or embarraſſing the public cauſe.

The common paſſion of all men in a great political line, was his in an emi-

nent degree, and he united to this a rage for knowledge, which he would have from the dead or the living, at whatever price it was to be bought, even, as has been ſuppoſed, to the injury of a princely fortune. When he had it, he by no means wanted *fineſſe* in making the beſt uſe of it. And this part of his character, added *to habits* of inſinuation and intrigue, had attached to him the unpopular name of Malagrida, by the writers of the *ſquibs* of the day.

I have already remarked, that he ſupported by a conſtant oppoſition, to which his ſpeeches in Parliament, equally full of eloquence and information, gave full luſtre, that *cauſe* which from the obſtinate or perſevering ſpirit of particular perſons, it was not in the power of *eloquence or information for ten years* to render ſucceſsful.

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But in this whole oppoſition againſt very firmly adopted meaſures, he knew ſo well his duty, in preſerving that degree of management which was proper, in every thing perſonally regarding the King, that not a word ever dropped in ſpeeches full of the bittereſt invectives againſt the *favourite* Miniſter of to-day, which, on a change of events, would ſtand in his Lordſhip's way of becoming a greater perſonal Favourite to-morrow. We ſhall ſee in the following arrangements how far this conduct ſucceeded.

Lord Rockingham, who was the center of union, the knot who bound the whole of this new Adminiſtration together, had hardly time to acquit himſelf of ſome public engagements, and to ſerve a few friends, old ſoldiers in the ſame long-fought battles, when his death cut ſhort every further expectation.

While he lived, there was no jealouſy among the Members of the Adminiſtration, at leaſt none which appeared, becauſe all the world agreed, that Lord Rockingham was the natural perſon to take the lead of that ſort of Adminiſtration, which now ſeemed to promiſe a permanence; ſo much ſo, that it was known and reſpected in and out of power, by the name of the Rockingham Party. Lord Shelburne, though neceſſarily a Cabinet Miniſter by his ſituation as Secretary of State, was not ſtrictly of what is called their *kidney*. He was diſtruſted, and, he knew, not without appearance of reaſon.

At the moment therefore that the intimate friends of Lord Rockingham were arranging to recommend to his Majeſty the Duke of Portland, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to fill their friend's place; the Secretary of State was employed in communicating, by an immediate

diate journey to the King at Windſor, the loſs they had received. Perhaps he was ignorant that the Duke of Portland had been, or was likely to be thought of before any other perſon, ſo early, and without a general communication; and the next day it was very well known that the Earl of Shelburne was appointed Firſt Miniſter, by the immediate nomination of the King.

The complaints of the oppoſite ſet of men, or rather the other component parts of Adminiſtration, had no other effect than to confirm this choice and determination, and to fix the new Miniſter, who while he renewed every promiſe to the Publick, and joined in the higheſt panegyrick on and condolence in the loſs of their late ſervant, endeavoured to turn the views of the people upon the jealouſy of his fellow Miniſters, which he called a conteſt for Power, and founded upon no better

motive

motive than a perſonal envy of his favour and ſituation.

As ſoon as he was fixed in his new employment, one of the firſt objects upon his hands was to make a Peace, of which every one ſaw the neceſſity, and which had been ardently and earneſtly called for by every part of the country; and as there was a bitter pill to ſwallow, in giving up the independence of America, the part he had to act was not without difficulty and hazard. He was *ſuſpected*, a word neceſſarily too common in ſpeaking of ſome great public characters; he was ſuſpected, I ſay, of having rather wiſhed to ſhew his talents in directing with brilliancy the continuance of a war, in which nothing *but brilliancy of action* could be expected, than thoſe of reconciling, in the ſettlement of a Peace, ſo many different intereſts without hazarding the honour of

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the country; and as it was known he did not want *fineſſe*; it was even imagined, that finding himſelf obliged to yield to the public voice, in adopting a meaſure not, as he thought, the beſt adapted to his genius, he reconciled himſelf to think it conſiſtent with the purity of intention he had profeſſed, to prove, by the Peace he did make, that the voice which called ſo loudly for it, had called too ſoon.

I pretend not to judge this inſinuation was too ſevere; we only know, that the country who had called for a Peace almoſt at all events, were ſo diſſatisfied with that which the Earl of Shelburne's Adminiſtration gave them, that his Lordſhip was obliged to retire from his ſituation before any proviſion was thought of for the appointment of a ſucceſſor.

This interregnum of Government continued for ſome weeks, after the ſigning the

the Preliminaries of Peace. His Majeſty being during this, in fact, *without* a *Miniſter*; for in condeſcenſion to the wiſhes of the country, he had accepted the reſignation of the Miniſter of his own choice, and no one other Party was conſiderable enough to impoſe on the Royal Ear the recommendation of an Adminiſtration, more diſpoſed to unite the general intereſts and opinions of the kingdom, with that deference due to the Sovereign. Beſides, this idea (if the ſuſpicion was founded) of forcing the choice of Miniſters on the King, was not only, according to the letter of the Conſtitution, a direct attack on an undoubted prerogative of the Crown, but carried ſomething very perſonally humiliating to his Majeſty, who had not ſo far forgot the principles of an European Monarch, as to content himſelf with ſitting on his throne, like a King

of

of the Marattas, the humble ſervant of his officers of ſtate.

Wiſhing to be impartial, I cannot avoid ſtating this view of things:—Attached at the ſame time, from many motives, to thoſe who bore the weight of this imputation, I wiſh to believe that it was not founded on any action, contrary to the loyalty they owed the King in perſon, and that the whole of ſuch reſiſtance or management, as the dexterity or duplicity of others obliged them to uſe, had nothing in it incompatible with the true and faithful obedience due to the Sovereign.

Unluckily the King, being irrevocably perſuaded otherwiſe, followed nothing more than the inſtinct of human nature, in repelling, with every exertion of his power and influence, an inſult, which he believed meant on him, in attacking

a Prerogative which was undiſputed, and by thoſe whom he had been long *taught to imagine*, neither bore him very good *wiſhes* nor good *opinion*. The ſincerity of the friendſhip of thoſe, who thought to make their court, in inſpiring him with theſe ſuſpicions, makes no part of my queſtion.

The only fact I remark (which is before touched on) is, that the ſuſpected parties, were, in general, the immediate deſcendants of thoſe, who had ſupported the introduction of the Royal Family to the Throne, and ſupported their claim againſt two dangerous rebellions, which threatened to overturn the Throne they ſat upon.

Without endeavouring to combat the probability of ſuch a conduct, founded upon ſuch intentions, the conſequence was the ſame, and it was the cauſe of another equally

equally unfortunate for the country, already diſtracted too long by the repeated changes in the Government.

There are few men of ſo pure and unmixed patriotiſm of mind, as to put every perſonal conſideration entirely out of the queſtion in the ſervice of the State, and who are capable of the moſt perfect and contented ſatisfaction in her proſperity, without a tincture of ambition to have the honour of a part in conducting her affairs.

Sometimes, once in a century perhaps, ſuch a character riſes in a country as a *phænomenon*; but however ſhining might be in ſome reſpects the character of the Earl of Shelburne, in this reſpect he was like moſt other great men; and ſeeing this honour ſnatched from him, by thoſe whoſe talents in many parts of Government and the politics of the times,

he might naturally, from a common ſelf-partiality, think inferior to his own, the excluſive privilege they were ſaid to aſſume, founded a natural ſubject of complaint, and even a plauſible one of accuſation and oppoſition. I have already ſaid, that the acceptance of his reſignation had been an effect of the perſonal condeſcenſion of the King, to the wiſhes of his people; or, if you will, to ſome leading Parties in Parliament.

Nothing therefore perſonally ſtood in the way at St. James's, to forming ſuch a junction, or rather disjunction in Parties, as to bring him back to the Cabinet, which he had hardly quitted. At all events he was ſure he could not give offence to his Sovereign, in negociating the detachment from a new oppoſition, of an old ſervant, who had preſerved for ſome years an inviolable ſubmiſſion, ſometimes againſt his *firſt* judgment, to the will of his

his Maſter, and in cutting off in future from him every hope of any other honour, than trying his talents once more in the ſame ſervice*. Whether theſe two great men reſembled one another on this occaſion, in mutually diſputing the leading poſt in the Cabinet, or that one of them, content with having for ten or twelve years, paid faithful and ſteady ſervice to his ſovereign, wiſhed for that of contributing to reſtore tranquillity to his country, were perhaps with ſome a queſtion.

The politics of the Earl of Shelburne, however, once more failed, and upon this failure was founded one of the moſt ſingular events of the reign. I ſpeak of the famous Coalition, which has made ſo much

* I ſhould have added, in ſpeaking of Lord Shelburne's negociation with Lord North, that I have heard this did not take place, till his Lordſhip (Shelburne), had felt Mr. Fox's pulſe on the ſubject, and found *he* was not to be dealt with.

noiſe

noiſe in the world, divided ſo many opinions, and the principles of which will, perhaps, never be clearly enough underſtood or juſtified; and poſterity, whenever it ſhall find a place in our hiſtory, will make a queſtion, whether ſo ſingular and unforeſeen a meaſure, was an advantage, or a prejudice to our affairs. The fact was, that the rivalſhip and jealouſy of party ſpirit, cauſed a ſort of balance which prevented any one Party from taking a decided lead.

We ſhall ſee that in the arrangements which followed, that of my Lord Shelburne was the only one excluded in his turn. His manœuvres having failed with reſpect to Lord North, this laſt thought proper to liſten to a negociation from another quarter, not formerly friendly to any thing he was connected with or concerned

cerned in, but who ſtood high in the credit and favour of the people.

It will be matter of ſurpriſe to thoſe not verſed in political neceſſities and modes of action, to ſee two perſons who had been the bittereſt enemies, and had too little managed this enmity perhaps, for ten years, on a ſubject, an eſſential point, which had half overturned the empire; one of which, had repeatedly and ſolemnly pledged himſelf to meet any diſgrace before he united with a man of whom the country ought never to loſe ſight of as a public enemy, and a public victim; it will be matter of ſurpriſe to ſee theſe two men unite, and reconcile their difference ſo eaſily for a common cauſe.

But though it is fair to ſtate the ground of complaint, as I think I have done, in the fulleſt light, theſe engagements and threats, too often and ſolemnly repeated,

was

was perhaps the *only* ground of true *reproach* on the Coalition in queſtion. But this was in its own nature ſo ſtrong, and had made ſuch an impreſſion on men's minds, that no ſubſequent conduct could entirely remove. Every angry word, much more the well-weighed and deliberate promiſes and engagements of the men of the firſt lead in a State, are carried and remembered every where. The after neceſſities, which make ſometimes deviations not only allowable but *meritorious*, are founded on a combination of political conſiderations, which requires all the judgment both of an *enlightened* and *experienced Politician* to enter into. The neceſſity of this union was not ſo underderſtood by the Country, as to inſure a permanence to an Adminiſtration who ſet out under another diſadvantage of not being favourites at St. James's. It might therefore be foretold, without prophecy,

that

that their continuance was not likely to be long. The occaſion taken for their downfall, was upon the ſubject of a Bill for the regulation of the Eaſt India Government, which, apart from other conſiderations, had been long an object of different Adminiſtrations, and which being a complicated ſubject, the ſeat of action at a diſtance, and the grounds both of Complaint and Reform little underſtood, it was eaſy to create an alarm, which became popular, againſt an Adminiſtration already, from one unfortunate circumſtance, diſtruſted in their outſet.

This Bill, after having paſſed the Houſe of Commons, by a very great majority, was, to ſay no more than truth, ſtrangled in the Lords, by the immediate interference of an authority, which has long been known to have had a growing and overgrown influence among the Peerage.

The hiſtory of what follows is not long—We ſee a very young Miniſter, of very brilliant talents, and unblemiſhed private character, brought forward in the hurry of the above manœuvres, by the immediate hands of the King, and, it muſt be confeſſed, with the approbation of a very great and reſpectable part of the country. On the other hand, it was a ſcene perfectly new ſince the acceſſion of the PRESENT ROYAL FAMILY, and indeed ſince the *Revolution*, on the principles of which only THEIR acceſſion was founded and juſtified, to ſee an Adminiſtration, of which the leading perſon was hardly in his five-and-twentieth year, ſtanding out upon the perſonal favour of the Crown, againſt a repeatedly declared diſapprobation of the Houſe of Commons. Each Party continued inflexible in ſupport of their right. There remained only one remedy,

remedy, in another exertion of a prerogative by a diſſolution. The People at large, to whom the appeal was made, certainly juſtified the policy of the meaſure, as far as the preſent moment was in queſtion; and the new *Parliament* was found to be compoſed of a ſet of men equally idolizing the new Miniſtry with thoſe who ſent them. Every impartial man muſt wiſh that this young man, upon a trial, may anſwer the expectations he has received ſuch ample credit for fulfilling; or that the illuſion, if an illuſion has overwhelmed the kingdom, will give way to that good ſenſe which, ſooner or later, will guide us to our true intereſts, and diſcover our true friends. As for that particular Party to whom I profeſs my attachment, I conſider them under a a ſort of proſcription. My only hope is, that they will not ſuffer themſelves to be

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ſo far diſguſted with the treatment they have received as to deſert the public poſt the laws of their Country place them in; and that, not being permitted to be of active ſervice, on this poſt they will hold themſelves in watchful readineſs, to prevent, as far as in them lies, the miſchievous intentions of others.

FINIS.